

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 053500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, CH

SUBJECT: CHINESE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION

REF: STATE 050198

1. PRCLO HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO PRESS NELSON GALLERY IN KANSAS CITY TO CLOSE ITS PERMANENT CHINESE COLLECTION AREA FOR DURATION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION. CHINESE ASSERT THAT SINCE THEY BELIEVE OBJECTS IN COLLECTION ARE PROPERTY OF CHINESE PEOPLE, HAVING COLLECTION OPEN TO PUBLIC DURING ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION COULD BE SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT.

2. NELSON GALLERY IS RELUCTANT TO AGREE TO DEMAND IN VIEW OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO ITS PATRONS AND PUBLIC AND ALSO FEARING ADVERSE PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION TO CLOSING. MUSEUM HAS ASKED FOR OUR GUIDANCE AND WE INFORMED THEM THAT WHILE FINAL DECISION, OF COURSE, UP TO MUSEUM, WE BELIEVE PRC DEMAND IS UNJUSTIFIED AND WITHOUT BASIS. WE TOLD THE MUSEUM THAT IF APPROACHED BY CHINESE WE ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT THEIR POSITION, IF THE MUSEUM ELECTED
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TO REJECT THE DEMAND.

GALLERY TRUSTEES NOW DIS-
CUSSING MATTER AND WILL INFORM US OF THEIR DECISION.

3. AT THIS POINT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FATHOM REASONING
BEHIND NEW CHINESE TWIST. PRC DID NOT RAISE THE SUBJECT
DURING PREVIOUS SHOWING IN TORONTO'S ROYAL ONTARIO
MUSEUM, WHICH HAS LARGE AND IMPRESSIVE CHINESE COLLEC-
TION.

4. AS SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM UNDERSTANDABLY ANXIOUS FOR
WORD ON DATES FOR EXHIBITION SHOWING, REQUEST USLO REPORT
SOONEST ON APPROACH TO MFA PER REFTTEL. INGERSOLL

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